

Select Board Meeting
Monday September 28, 2020
6:30 PM
Remotely via Zoom
Draft Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Julie Gilman, Molly Cowan, Lovey Roundtree Oliff, Daryl Browne, Niko Papakonstantis, and Russ Dean were present at this meeting. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Papakonstantis at 6:30 PM.

Mr. Papakonstantis said that gatherings of 10 or more people currently pose a risk to our community. The Select Board meeting is imperative to maintaining the Town of Exeter public services, so per RSA 91-A:2(3)b, this meeting will be conducted without a quorum of this body being physically present in one location. He welcomed the members of the public attending remotely, and said the usual rules of conduct and decorum will apply. All votes will require a roll call vote.

2. Board Interviews

- a. Marc Dettore was interviewed for the Planning Board.
- b. Lionel Ingram was interviewed for the Exeter Police Stakeholders Committee (EPSC).
- c. Kenneth Mendis was interviewed for the EPSC.
- d. Harry King was scheduled to interview for the EPSC, but was asked to return the next week due to technical issues.

3. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

4. Proclamations/Recognitions

- a. Mr. Papakonstantis said that the ICMA [International City Management Association] recognized Mr. Dean with an award for his 25 years of municipal service.

5. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting: September 14, 2020

MOTION: Ms. Oliff moved to accept the minutes as presented. Mr. Browne seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

6. Appointments

- a. There were no appointments made at this meeting.

7. Discussion/Action Items

- a. Renay Allen - Pocket Park Updates

Ms. Allen spoke about the Jude Hall Pocket Park proposal, which will honor the historic Black community in Exeter, which was 125 - 150 people over a hundred year period, from 1790 - 1890. She formed an impromptu committee with two groups, focusing on siting and cultural context. The siting group is in

favor of the original location at the front of the park. They estimate a cost of \$10,000, which will be a combination of her book's proceeds and fundraising. She asked where they should seek approval when they have a complete proposal. Mr. Dean said the Swasey Trustees should be involved, but the Select Board would make the final decision.

b. Water Restrictions - Town Ordinance Updates

Jennifer Perry, the Director of Public Works, gave an update on the drought conditions. They've seen a good reduction since the last meeting, when they enacted a complete watering ban, but there's still a nine inch deficit, and it's unlikely they will recover what they need prior to winter. They should continue to not allow outdoor watering, likely through to next spring.

Ms. Perry proposed modifications to Ordinance 16:10 on Water Use Restriction. Mr. Dean said this would be the first reading of the ordinance change, and there must be two more readings.

Ms. Gilman read the changes:

Chapter 16:10 Water Use Restrictions. Amend 16:10.1 to update the "Board of Selectmen" to read "Select Board." In 16:10.3, residential is crossed out, and the restriction now applies to all well users in town. In 16:10.8, we are changing c and adding d, "The grass playing turf of a recreational field, the grass playing surfaces of a golf course, and grass agricultural fields including sod production, may be excluded from the requirements of 16:10.2.

c. Arts & Culture Advisory Commission

Ms. Oliff said she is very interested in serving on the new Arts & Culture Board. They should start taking in applications to give some time to get the word out. Mr. Browne asked the difference between a commission and a committee. Ms. Gilman said a commission is more regulatory. Mr. Papakonstantis said if they find the group is serving a more advisory role they could change it to committee. Ms. Cowan said they previously had an Arts Committee, but this is going to serve a larger function than permitting; it will coordinate other existing committees. Ms. Gilman said she preferred committee.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve the establishment of an Exeter Arts and Cultural Committee as presented. Mr. Browne seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

d. FY21 Preliminary Budget Overview

Mr. Dean presented an overview of the FY21 Budget. They are not allowing departments to ask for new positions unless there is an alternate source of funding. Normally they would be attending trainings, conferences, and seminars, but that has been mostly eliminated. There are some overall expense increases. The General Fund Budget is lower; it normally increases by 3-5%, but this year is a 2.19% increase.

The Land Use change tax has a \$50,000 estimate. Payment in lieu of taxes and small tax revenue are steady. Motor vehicle permit fees are steady. Building permits dropped from \$350,000 to \$200,000 for FY20 and they kept that.

Town Clerk fees are at \$210,000. Meals and Rooms Tax and Highway Block Grant are the same as FY20. Income from Departments has been reduced by \$75,000, down to \$1M. Interest income was strong in 2019, but has dropped to \$55,000. They're no longer renting the 149 Kingston Road House, so rental income has dropped. Charitable Income is the same. They anticipate a \$700,000 fund balance, and they are scheduled to use that again in FY21.

On the expense side, General Government has a decrease in Election Registration as there is only one election. In Human Resources, they rebudgeted reclassifications at \$1. The Moderator budget is down in correlation with fewer elections. The Town Clerk is up 2.83%. Health insurance is in a reserve account, at an 8.1% increase.

In Finance, there's a decrease of 2.12% in Assessing and Tax Collection. They brought down education and training, and no travel reimbursement is budgeted. They're negotiating a new contract with MRI next year.

In Planning, there's a reduction for the completed impact fee study. In Economic Development, there's no intern or travel budgeted. Building is up slightly.

In Police and Fire, Communications and Health, Police has an 0.37% increase. There's some increase in admin staffing. On the Fire side, there are mainly wage and benefit changes. There's a big increase in retirement assessment in July 2021. Communications and Health are down. James Murray has negotiated a reduction on the mosquito control program.

The Public Works General Fund budget is down \$62,718. In Highways and Streets, \$100,000 was taken out of the paving budgets, and there were other line item reductions. In Solid Waste, there was an increase in blue bag disposal. Streetlights are level. The Stormwater budget has been cut back \$6,000. Maintenance up 5.53%, budgeting for Covid expenses. \$11-15K in the budget.

Welfare and Human Services are mainly level funded, much of it based on requests from human service agencies. This year the Human Services funding committee recommends a budget of \$106,720.

The Other Culture and Recreations budget is small but important, and includes the Christmas budget and parades.

The Library budget is up 4.5%. This budget comes through the Library Trustees and becomes part of the main budget. There's a debt service and capital increase related to the Library renovation. The first payment is in the FY21 Budget year. The renovation should be finished in May 2021.

In Vehicle and Equipment Leases there's a budget of \$396,615, a decrease of 4.87%. The Ladder One replacement in FY20 was about \$200,000. Other than two hybrid cruisers, there are no vehicle capital requests in this budget. They asked for \$10,000 to work with a consultant for a town vehicle and heavy equipment audit.

The total budget request is \$20,035,290, a 2.19% increase over FY20.

For Warrant Articles, there's the Sick Leave and Snow and Ice appropriations. The Parks and Rec CRF dropped to \$41,350 from \$100,000 in

FY20. There's an article for Stewart Park Seawall Deficit funding, which will wipe that off the books. There's \$150,000 for the Public Works Facility Garage. There's a Public Safety Alternatives Analysis at \$200,000, which would create a template for moving forward with Public Safety Facility planning. There's a Bike/pedestrian Master Plan and a Waterfront Seawall project at \$25,000. All of these projects relate to the Master Plan.

There's a Bond Issue for the Salem St. Area Utility Replacement project, at \$1,060,000. Overall it's a \$5.5M project.

In Water/Sewer, Water has a 6.5% increase, due to the first payment for the Groundwater/Surfacewater project. There's an increase for meter replacement. Sludge cleaning costs have gone up. There are Surfacewater treatment upgrades. In Sewer, there was an increase in administration due to EPA permit activity. There's an increase in the Collection budget, due to a dredging of Clemson Lagoon for \$75,000. The Treatment budget is down \$86,552, because they have a better understanding of the budgets at the new plant. There's a Debt Service budget decrease of 14.62%. Capital Outlay is level with last year. There's a Sewer Capital project, utility replacements, and the lagoon sludge removal in the CIP. One question is should they bond all of this up front, as interest rates now are favorable.

Mr. Papakonstantis asked what they will do with the currently open positions. Mr. Dean said they've authorized the filling of the HVAC/Plumber, Police Officer, and Assistant Fire Chief 2, but they're holding other positions vacant.

Mr. Browne asked if there would be an 8.1% Health increase, and Mr. Dean said that's the projection but it won't be final until later in the year.

e. COVID 19 Updates

Chief Wilking said their fire suppression ponds are low but cisterns are full. They will draw water from the river if necessary. They had 12 residents test positive for Covid in the last two weeks. Residents should continue to be diligent and social distance. Emergency management looking at the upcoming holiday seasons, they'll be having meetings about guidelines. Ms. Cowan asked whether there are additional fire restrictions in a drought. Chief Wilking said the Governor has restricted all burning on public land, and there's a Category 3 fire prohibition, which is open brush or grass fires. Residents can still do open burning in an approved fire pit or ring. Those of 2' diameter or less are not restricted, while those of 2-4' diameter are restricted to the evening hours.

Mr. Murray said the CDC issued holiday recommendations, saying that trick or treat is a high risk activity. The State has also released guidelines. There will be an NHMA webinar on Wednesday that will give more details. They haven't yet come to a town recommendation.

Mr. Bisson said that fall programs are underway, with 200+ athletes playing sports. There is adequate social distancing, with only one team practicing

nightly. Enrichment programs are going well, people are happy to get out of the house.

Mr. Dean said they submitted an initial expense reimbursement request for Covid-related costs of the election.

8. Regular Business

a. Tax Abatements, Veterans Credits and Exemptions

- i. There were no abatements at this meeting.

b. Permits & Approvals

- i. Mr. Bisson said that Parks and Rec currently has a 1999 John Deere tractor that does not function well. In March, voters approved \$58,000 for a replacement. He worked with Jay Perkins at the Highway Department and put out specs to area tractor dealers. They received two bids.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to award the Mini Loader sale to MB Tractor for \$56,819 and allow the Parks and Rec to surplus out the 1999 John Deere Tractor. Mr. Browne seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

- ii. Request for an approval of an address change. Mr. Dean said that this is a property owned by Frank Ferraro, and is a voluntary change that he signed off on. 7 Hampton Road is changing to Unit 1 and 2, as it's becoming a duplex.

MOTION: Ms. Gilman moved to approve the voluntary change of address of 7 Hampton Road to 7 Hampton Road Unit 1 and 7 Hampton Road Unit 2. Mr. Browne seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

c. Town Manager's Report

- i. There's a BRC meeting this Wednesday.
- ii. There will be a tour of the Library at 10 AM on Thursday with the Director of the Library, the builder, and the architect.
- iii. Riverwoods has filed for an abatement, looking at the value of their property vs the town valuation. Riverwoods has chosen to go to Superior Court to address it.
- iv. He attended a Downeaster station operation meeting via Zoom.
- v. He will ask the Board to consider an Indigenous Peoples Day initiative.

d. Select Board Committee Reports

- i. Ms. Oliff was unable to attend the Swasey Park Trustee site walk Wednesday.
- ii. Mr. Browne said the Communications Committee meeting was delayed. They will be reviewing the website and pushing the survey forward. The Facilities Committee is planning to send a letter to the BRC re the Public Works garage and the Public Safety facility planning.
- iii. Ms. Gilman had a day with the State Government at UNH where no veto was overturned.
- iv. Ms. Cowan said the E911 Committee decided to conduct its business through the Select Board. At the Planning Board meeting, two applicants

asked for a continuance, but it was still a long meeting. They're making some progress. There's a Parks and Rec Advisory tomorrow.

- v. Mr. Papakonstantis said there's a Sustainability meeting on Oct 6.

e. Correspondence

- i. A letter from Mr. Dean to Senator Shaheen about the State Aid Grant program. They're trying to address the shortfall.
- ii. Correspondence from COAST related to a credit based on the pandemic impact. The amount is \$1,700 of the \$20,000 COAST funding.
- iii. A letter from Black Lives Matter sent to multiple stakeholders. Ms. Gilman asked how they should respond. Mr. Papakonstantis said he could do a first draft. Ms. Gilman suggested he work with Chief Poulin. Ms. Gilman said upon reading it she thinks that it's more about candidates, so she can handle the response. Ms. Cowan asked if the group could come before the Board to clarify what they're looking for.
- iv. A Downeaster report which shows ridership by month.
- v. A notice from the Town of Kingston Planning Board; Exeter is granted abutter status on a project coming up for planning board hearing tomorrow. Mr. Dean said Dave Sharples will attend.
- vi. An application for Mr. Dean to serve another term on the Health Trust Board.
- vii. Correspondence between a resident and PEA.
- viii. A notice from James St. Jean auctioneers on the State of NH webcast surplus property auction.
- ix. Correspondence from Matt Berube to someone inquiring about Powerwash.
- x. An email from a resident supporting Halloween in Exeter.
- xi. A notice of the Park Street Common Memorial Tree Celebration. Eileen Flockhart has organized a ceremony Sept 30 at 3:30, but the trees won't be planted until next spring because of the drought.

9. Review Board Calendar

Mr. Papakonstantis said that due to the holiday Oct 12 and the Election Nov 3, the upcoming meetings will be Oct 5, Oct 19, and Oct 26.

10. Non-Public Session

- a. There was no non-public session at this meeting.

11. Adjournment

MOTION: Ms. Oliff moved to adjourn. Mr. Browne seconded. By a roll call vote, all were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 9:14 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary